

# **CITIZEN CORPS**

*A Guide for Local Officials*

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Americans have acted with courage, compassion, and unity. To capture this spirit and to foster an American culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility, President George W. Bush has called upon all Americans to dedicate at least two years of their lives—the equivalent of 4,000 hours—in service to others. He launched the USA Freedom Corps initiative to inspire and enable all Americans to find ways to serve their community, their country, or the world.

Citizen Corps is the component of USA Freedom Corps that creates opportunities for individuals to volunteer to help their communities prepare for and respond to emergencies by bringing together local leaders, citizen volunteers and the network of first responder organizations, such as fire departments, police departments and emergency medical personnel. The goal is to have all citizens participate in making their communities safer, stronger, and better prepared for preventing and handling threats of terrorism, crime, and disasters of all kinds.

### **Citizen Corps Leadership**

The Citizen Corps effort will be coordinated at the local level by Citizen Corps Councils, or a similar coordinating body, which will bring together leaders from the relevant sectors of your community. The purpose of the council is to have all decision makers at the table to manage existing volunteer resources, to leverage mutually supportive endeavors among the represented groups, and to direct the overall local plans to implement Citizen Corps in the community.

At the state level, the governor will appoint a state coordinator for Citizen Corps to facilitate this locally driven initiative. The state coordinator will work closely with the local governments, other state organizations, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and other federal agencies to implement a successful Citizen Corps program for the state.

Key state responsibilities include: identifying needs and developing a statewide strategy for increasing the first responder and volunteer collaboration; developing statewide marketing strategies; matching Citizen Corps training needs with other major state training initiatives; reporting statewide accomplishments; and ensuring that Citizen Corps communities receive considerations for relevant grant funding administered by the state.

President Bush has requested more than \$230 million from Congress in Fiscal Year 2003 to support and expand Citizen Corps initiatives. This amount includes funds to support the five national Citizen Corps programs, including nationwide CERT training, and grants to communities through the State to support local activities that foster preparedness programs and partnerships between the first responder organizations and the volunteers. If Congress approves this budget, these funds would be available in October 2002.

## Citizen Corps Programs

Citizen Corps programs build on the successful efforts that are in place in many communities around the country to prevent crime and respond to emergencies. Programs that started through local innovation are the foundation for Citizen Corps and this national approach to citizen participation in community safety.

Currently three federal agencies, FEMA, DOJ, and HHS, administer five programs that are being promoted at the national level as part of Citizen Corps. These programs will be implemented nation wide by August 2002. FEMA coordinates the overall effort of helping communities establish local Citizen Corps programs.

The five national Citizen Corps programs are:

- The ***Neighborhood Watch Program***, funded by DOJ, has been expanded to incorporate terrorism prevention and education into its existing crime prevention mission. The goal is to double the number of groups participating in Neighborhood Watch by 2004. Additional information is available at the National Sheriffs Association website at [www.usaonwatch.org](http://www.usaonwatch.org).
- FEMA's ***Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)*** program provides training in emergency preparedness and in basic response techniques to local trainers who in turn train citizens, enabling them to take a more active role in personal and public safety. The goal is to triple the number of citizens who are CERT trained, increasing the number nationwide to 600,000 by 2004. Additional information on CERT is available at [www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/cert](http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/cert).
- ***Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)*** is a program administered by DOJ. The program, which will be launched nationwide in spring 2002, provides training for volunteers to perform administrative and non-intervention policing activities to free up law enforcement professionals for frontline duty.
- HHS will administer a community-based ***Medical Reserve Corps*** that will be launched in summer 2002. Through this program, currently practicing and retired volunteers trained in medicine will be able to assist during large-scale emergencies and will augment the emergency medical response community. Medical Reserve Corps volunteers can also play a productive role in meeting pressing but non-emergency public health needs of the community throughout the year.
- ***Terrorism Information and Prevention System (Operation TIPS)***, administered by DOJ, is scheduled to be launched in late summer 2002 as a pilot program in 10 cities before spreading across the country. This program will enlist the help of millions of American workers who, in the daily course of their work, are in a unique position to serve as extra eyes and ears for law enforcement. Operation TIPS will provide training for these workers from selected industries in how to look out for suspicious and potentially terrorist-related activity and then in how to report that information through a toll free number.

There are also many other opportunities for participating in Citizen Corps. There is a vast array of educational and volunteer activities already underway across the country that focus on making communities safer, stronger, and better prepared. These activities are also part of Citizen Corps.

## **Local Government Implementation**

Citizen Corps is designed to be tailored to each community and will be managed at the local level by Citizen Corps Councils, or a similar entity, comprised of leaders from: emergency management and the first responder community; volunteer, community service, faith- and community-based organizations; educational institutions; medical facilities; business and industry; and the community's neighborhood networks.

Each community that is implementing Citizen Corps should consider creating a Citizen Corps Council. This guide will help your community join the many others across the country that have already started Citizen Corps Councils in order to be prepared to fully implement the Citizen Corps programs in their communities.

The primary objectives of the councils are to:

- Match the needs of first responders with the skills and abilities of volunteers to make their families, their homes, and their communities safer from the threats of terrorism, crime, and disasters.
- Educate the public on safety, help citizens take an active role in protecting themselves from harm, and teach citizens what to do in the event of a crisis.
- Spearhead efforts to offer citizens new and existing volunteer opportunities, educational information, and training courses to address crime, terrorism, and natural disaster risks.
- Promote all Citizen Corps programs and activities across the community.
- Capture innovative practices and report accomplishments that can be replicated in other communities nationally.
- Survey the community to assess increased awareness and Citizen Corps participation.

Creating a new organization to start Citizen Corps is not required. If your community already has a strong team that brings together all sectors of your community, including first responders and volunteer groups, you may want to ask this group to take on the responsibility of promoting Citizen Corps and to acknowledge this group as affiliated with Citizen Corps. You are strongly encouraged to leverage existing resources and build on current successful programs whenever possible.

## **Benefits to the Community**

Major disasters in a community can overload the capability of first responders, especially during the first 12 to 72 hours of the response. Having citizens who are better prepared to take care of themselves and others during times of crisis will allow first responders to focus their efforts on the most critical, life-threatening situations.

In addition, there are many tasks that a well-trained and organized group of volunteers could perform on an ongoing basis that would free up sworn officers, licensed health professionals, and professional firefighters so that they could focus more on immediate emergency response needs and less on the routine



or administrative aspects of their responsibilities. Successful models of such activity exist throughout the country and are primed to be taken nationwide.

Citizen Corps will help citizens take a more active role in crime prevention, risk reduction, and emergency preparedness. It will bring together all sectors of the community involved in first responder issues and will enable them to establish ongoing working relationships and to work together in times of crisis. As a component of President Bush's call to service, Citizen Corps will also help build a community's sense of pride and cohesion.

# I. CITIZEN CORPS

## Overview

During his 2002 State of the Union address, President George W. Bush called upon every American to commit at least two years of their lives – the equivalent of 4,000 hours – to the service of others. Through the USA Freedom Corps, he wants to help every American answer that call to service by strengthening and expanding service opportunities to protect our homeland, to support our communities, and to extend American compassion around the world.

Coordinated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Citizen Corps is the component of the USA Freedom Corps that focuses on opportunities for people across the country to participate in a range of measures to make their families, homes, and communities safer from the threats of terrorism, crime, and disasters of all kinds. Citizen Corps also brings together a community's first responders, firefighters, emergency health care providers, law enforcement, and emergency managers with its volunteer resources.

Citizen Corps will help people across America take a more active role in crime prevention, support the emergency medical community, and be better trained in a wide range of emergency preparedness and disaster response activities. The events of this past year have motivated many Americans to want to help others more and to strengthen their communities. Citizen Corps offers the means for citizens to help make our communities safer, stronger, and better prepared and to answer the President's call to service.

## Components of Citizen Corps

The Citizen Corps effort will be coordinated at the local level by Citizen Corps Councils, or a similar coordinating body, which will bring together leaders from the relevant sectors of your community. The purpose of the council is to have all decision makers at the table to manage existing volunteer resources, to leverage mutually supportive endeavors among the represented groups, and to direct the overall local plans to implement Citizen Corps in the community.

Additional explanation of the Citizen Corps Councils is provided in Section II.

## Current National Programs

Currently, there are five federal programs that are being promoted at the national level to be implemented locally as part of Citizen Corps. The long-term goal is to have every community offer each of these programs to its residents and those who have had special training or work in selected industries.

- The ***Neighborhood Watch Program***, funded by the Department of Justice (DOJ), has been expanded to incorporate terrorism prevention and education into its existing crime prevention mission. The goal is to double the number of groups participating in Neighborhood Watch by 2004. Additional information is available at the National Sheriffs Association website at [www.usaonwatch.org](http://www.usaonwatch.org).

- FEMA's **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** program provides training in emergency preparedness and in basic response techniques to local trainers who in turn train citizens, enabling them to take a more active role in personal and public safety. The goal is to triple the number of citizens who are CERT trained, increasing the number nationwide to 600,000 by 2004. Additional information on CERT is available at [www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/cert](http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/cert).
- The **Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)** is a program administered by DOJ. The program, which will be launched nationwide in spring 2002, provides training for volunteers to perform administrative and non-intervention policing activities to free up law enforcement professionals for frontline duty.
- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will administer a community-based **Medical Reserve Corps** that will be launched in summer 2002. Through this program, currently practicing and retired volunteers trained in medicine will be able to assist during large-scale emergencies and will augment the emergency medical response community. Medical Reserve Corps volunteers can also play a productive role in meeting pressing but non-emergency public health needs of the community throughout the year.
- **Terrorism Information and Prevention System (Operation TIPS)**, administered by DOJ, is scheduled to be launched in late summer 2002 as a pilot program in 10 cities before spreading across the country. This program will enlist the help of millions of American workers who, in the daily course of their work, are in a unique position to serve as extra eyes and ears for law enforcement. Operation TIPS will provide training for these workers from selected industries in how to look out for suspicious and potentially terrorist-related activity and in how to report that information through a toll free number.

Additional Citizen Corps resources include:

- The **Citizens' Preparedness Guidebook**, produced by the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) with support from DOJ, provides current crime and disaster preparedness techniques, as well as the latest information on terrorism, to give Americans guidance on how to prepare in our homes, neighborhoods, at work, at the airport, in places of worship, and in public spaces. The guide is available on the Citizen Corps website [www.citizencorps.gov](http://www.citizencorps.gov) or by calling NCPC at 1-800-WE-PREVENT (1-800-937-7383).
- Appendix A provides the website address of other federal agencies and organizations that have useful information relating to the Citizen Corps mission.

### **Other Activities**

There are many other opportunities for participating in Citizen Corps. There is a vast array of educational and volunteer activities already underway across the country that focus on making communities safer, stronger, and better prepared. They can be either interest-based programs or broad, community-wide initiatives. If your community participates in such activities, you may choose to integrate these efforts into the local Citizen Corps right away. Examples could include:

- Local activities that are similar to Neighborhood Watch, CERT, or VIPS, but may have different names in your community;



- Family preparedness materials being taught and distributed in neighborhoods, in the workplace, and throughout the school system;
- Community, faith-based, and youth programs that establish neighborhood support networks and disseminate disaster preparedness educational materials and preparedness kits to disadvantaged, elderly, non-English speaking, and persons with disabilities;
- Programs that involve volunteer medical professionals in an organized response to emergencies, such as those administered by the American Red Cross;
- Volunteer amateur radio operators serving as reserve communications experts in times of crisis;
- Volunteer engineers and engineering students performing structural analysis on critical infrastructure, lifelines, schools, and at-risk buildings;
- Programs for volunteers to participate in projects to reduce the damage to schools, hospitals, and other public buildings from known hazards in your area, such as floods, tornados, earthquakes, and hurricanes;
- Community and family disaster preparedness efforts conducted by established volunteer groups such as local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) and volunteer centers, or community service organizations, churches and faith-based organizations already active in your community;
- Volunteer fire departments and emergency medical teams;
- Programs supported by the local Chamber of Commerce to train business owners and employees on disaster preparedness and emergency response measures;
- High schools and college community service groups that promote Citizen Corps principles; and
- Volunteer participation in developing a community communications system for the color-coded Homeland Security Advisory System.

Every community is different. Citizen Corps calls on your community's creativity and inventiveness to develop other programs or activities that work in your area and that encompass all sectors of your community. Successful programs or approaches to citizen participation that start in one community can spread nationwide through the Citizen Corps network.

## **Benefits to your Community**

Securing our safety and freedom requires that we all work together. Every American has a critical role to play. Major disasters in a community can overload the capability of first responders, especially during the first critical 12 to 72 hours of the event. Citizen Corps will provide the community with a well-trained, readily available pool of local people who know their community and who can help during this critical time when outside assistance may have not yet arrived.

On a day-to-day basis, your council will help citizens take a more active role in crime prevention, risk reduction and emergency preparedness. Citizen Corps Councils and the programs they oversee will make your community a safer, better place to live. Specific benefits include:

- Supplementing a community's professional police, fire, emergency management, public health, and public safety capabilities where appropriate, especially in times of emergency;
- Giving the residents of your community a greater sense of security, responsibility, and personal control;
- Showcasing your community's efforts in crime prevention, public safety, emergency medical response, risk reduction and mitigation practices, emergency preparedness, and emergency response as part of the national Citizen Corps initiative;
- Bringing together the volunteer and the first responder communities to promote the concept that everyone has a role in making their community safer, stronger, and better prepared;
- Demonstrating your leadership and your personal commitment to the safety of your community;
- Building community pride and patriotism; and
- Preparing us all for the vital role of caring for ourselves and others in times of crisis.

## II. CITIZEN CORPS COUNCILS

### Organizing a Citizen Corps Council

Communities all across America already embrace the principles of Citizen Corps. There are many elected officials, business leaders, and involved citizens already doing their part to make their community a great place to live. Many communities also already have an organization that promotes public safety, disaster preparedness, and crime prevention in the community. No doubt, there is a strong base already involved in this effort in your own community. These activities are at the heart of Citizen Corps.

The Citizen Corps Councils will bring together leaders from the relevant sectors of your community to coordinate the Citizen Corps effort. The purpose of the council is to have all decision makers at the table to manage existing volunteer resources, to leverage mutually supportive endeavors among the represented groups, and to direct the overall local plans to implement Citizen Corps in the community. Each community should have only one group that is implementing the Citizen Corps.

Each community and region will have to determine its geographic boundaries and its own membership. Suggested membership of the Citizen Corps Council, or similar entity, includes the following:

- Leadership from elected officials, such as the mayor, city council members, county commissioners, or the tribal government leaders;
- Leadership from emergency management and from the first responder community: law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services, and health care providers;
- Leadership from volunteer, community service, and faith-based groups, including a local VOAD group and a volunteer center, if you have one;
- Leadership from any existing community substructure, such as advisory neighborhood commissions, wards, voting districts, water and sewer districts, or other groups that represent a large cross-section of the community; and
- Leadership from major industries or other groups in the area, such as community leaders from educational institutions and school boards, the business community, environmental and transportation groups, including airports, and utility providers. Other representatives could be from specific segments of the community, such as the elderly, minority populations, non-English speakers, and local media executives.

The primary qualification to participating on the council is making a commitment to educate the public on safety, to help citizens take an active role in protecting themselves from harm, to teach citizens what to do in the event of a crisis, and to expand volunteer opportunities that will make the community safer.

You do not need to create a new organization to start Citizen Corps. Leveraging existing resources is strongly encouraged. If your community already has a strong team that brings together all sectors of your community, including first responders and volunteer groups, you may want to ask this group to take on the responsibility of promoting Citizen Corps and to acknowledge this group as affiliated with the Citizen Corps.

There may be an existing group in your community that includes many of the appropriate participants, such as local emergency planning committees, that could take the lead on joining with additional relevant parties to implement Citizen Corps.

There are a number of national organizations, such as the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army, that could be key participants in your local management structure. If your community does not have local representation of these groups, you may want to contact the national organization to see how you can start a local affiliate.

However you choose to establish the local management structure, this group should be charged with managing all aspects of Citizen Corps at the local level and with bringing Citizen Corps programs and principles to residents of the community. And there should be only one group officially assigned this responsibility.

The purpose of the Citizen Corps Council, or similar coordinating group, is to develop a systematic, efficient, and effective method for providing public education, stimulating wide-spread participation, and organizing volunteer programs to increase the safety of your community. Having duplicative efforts or competing entities is not productive.

Depending on the size of your community, you may need to have a steering committee within the Citizen Corps Council and subcommittees to focus on particular efforts. Subcommittees could be assigned a particular function, such as marketing and communications, or a particular focus, such as K-12 education on emergency preparedness.

### **The Importance of Leadership**

Leadership within the council is critical for success. This leader could be an elected community official, an executive with one of your community's major employers, the head of your community's economic development group, or a leader from the volunteer community. Because of the first responder's role in the event of an emergency, it is suggested that first responder representatives not take the lead role for the council.

The most important qualifications for the leader of the council are the ability to motivate team members to reach your collective goal of making your community a safer place to live, work, and play and of providing opportunities for all citizens to participate; and a commitment to broad community representation. If the local elected official is not the operational leader of the council, it will be critical that he or she provide clear and public support to the council through public endorsements and be kept informed of council activities.

## **Responsibilities of the Citizen Corps Council**

While this initiative provides tremendous flexibility for you to implement Citizen Corps in a way that best suits your community, some general responsibilities of the local organizing group include:

- Creating an action plan to involve the community in prevention, preparedness, and response activities and to mobilize the community in a large-scale event;
- Identifying ways in which the community's volunteer resources can help meet the needs of its first responders;
- Working with existing neighborhood leaders, or creating a neighborhood leadership structure, to design a systematic approach to educate the public and encourage Citizen Corps participation throughout the community;
- Spearheading efforts to offer citizens new and existing volunteer opportunities, educational information, and training courses to address crime, terrorism, and natural disaster risks;
- Recognizing all activities that promote prevention, preparedness and response training as a part of Citizen Corps and encouraging new endeavors;
- Organizing special projects and community events to promote Citizen Corps activities and recruiting volunteers to participate;
- Fostering a spirit of mutual support by working with Citizen Corps Councils in neighboring communities and jurisdictions to be able to share resources in times of need;
- Capturing innovative practices and reporting accomplishments to the state coordinator for Citizen Corps; and
- Surveying your community to assess increased awareness and Citizen Corps participation.

## **Liability Issues**

Councils should consult with a local attorney regarding any risks or liabilities that might arise from its activities. Most local bar associations encourage members to provide pro bono (free of charge) services to worthwhile causes. A council's potential exposure to liability for acts or omissions of its staff or volunteers will vary from state to state.

Individuals who participate in council activities should be advised of their potential risks of liability under state law as well. Some volunteer activities may be covered by so-called Good Samaritan laws in the various states, these laws protect volunteers who render assistance in limited circumstances. Councils may consider obtaining release from liability and similar instruments if the local counsel deems it necessary.

## III. GETTING STARTED

### Initial Meetings

Creating a Citizen Corps Council or asking an existing organizing group to expand their mission and take on this responsibility is an easy first step to making Citizen Corps an active part of your community. You may want to hold one or more brainstorming sessions, where council members can collectively identify goals for your community and develop a better understanding of the risks your community faces. Topics that the Citizen Corps Council might address can include:

- Educating council members on the roles, responsibilities, and practices of the first responders, volunteer organizations, and any existing neighborhood organizational structure in the community;
- Identifying the existing activities and resources within your community that support Citizen Corps principles;
- Identifying volunteer groups and opportunities within your community that could assist in reducing risk or that could supplement resources in an emergency;
- Creating a menu of volunteer opportunities in which community residents could easily participate or partnering with the local volunteer center, if you have one, to design volunteer recruitment strategies;
- Assessing resources within your community that could be drawn on to support volunteerism and public education in your community;
- Identifying possible resources to support Citizen Corps, including local private sector support and contributions from foundations and non-profit organizations;
- Discussing opportunities to build public awareness and to educate the community about Citizen Corps opportunities within your community; and
- Developing a wish list of additional resources that your community might need to support a comprehensive Citizen Corps effort.

### Developing a Citizen Corps Action Plan

As you begin to assess your needs and resources, you should work toward developing a clear mission statement and an action plan. Your Citizen Corps Council action plan could include short and long-term goals, a community communication system for emergency warnings, and a community mobilization plan with a specific plan outlining how to meet these goals.

Short-term goals could include having working smoke alarms and emergency kits in every household by the time school starts again in the fall, having each business in the community practice their evacuation plans within a month, training all senior high school students in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), or having Neighborhood Watch groups in all neighborhoods of the community. You may also want to target specific groups within your community, such as people living in high-risk areas, the youth population, and Americans with disabilities or disadvantaged populations.

It will be important for you to set meaningful, attainable goals, to make them public, to meet them, and then to recognize and celebrate your success.

### **Linking Local Activities with the National Effort**

It will be important for you to link local activities to the national effort. Although you may have an existing organization take on this responsibility and not create a new Citizen Corps Council, it is critical that all activities at the local level that encompass citizen participation in emergency preparedness, response capability training, crime prevention, and skill-based volunteer programs related to community safety be identified with Citizen Corps.

A great way to get started is to have a public event to recognize the activities that volunteers, first responders, and residents in your community are already doing that relate to Citizen Corps. Explain that there is a new national initiative to link all these activities and to introduce other activities to promote personal and community safety. Make a commitment to help each resident in the community participate in Citizen Corps. Citizen participation can include:

- Becoming better prepared and taking measures to reduce risk within their home, such as putting together a family emergency preparedness plan and kit, installing smoke detectors or elevating electrical appliances above flood stage, securing free standing shelving to a wall or strapping down a water heater;
- Being a part of a Neighborhood Watch Program group;
- Becoming a volunteer firefighter or emergency medical technician;
- Volunteering their particular skills to help with community risk assessments; and
- Volunteering with community organizations already active in disaster preparedness and response.

The goal is to include everyone in your community. One of your first steps to support Citizen Corps is to promote the initiative and to expand the range of opportunities available to the residents of your community. Other opportunities for Citizen Corps volunteers are listed in Appendix C.

There is no standard way to approach promoting your local efforts; each community is encouraged to be creative and to use the Citizen Corps message to promote participation. Your community may host community-wide Citizen Corps community preparedness days to challenge everyone in the community to put together a home emergency preparedness kit. Another may put the Citizen Corps logo on appropriate local websites. Another may use the local media outlets to promote local Citizen Corps activities and to educate the public. Another may focus on the school system to disseminate information. And some communities will do all of these and more.

## **Information Sharing**

A critical part of making Citizen Corps a success is building a network of communities that are committed to engaging their citizens in making their neighborhoods safer, stronger, and better prepared for all situations. To facilitate this network, FEMA will provide a directory of Citizen Corps Councils. Through this directory you will be able to contact other Citizen Corps Councils throughout the nation and have a direct exchange of information with your counterparts. This directory will also enable your state and federal partners to contact you with updated information as the programs evolve nationally and to collect innovative local practices for national promotion.

As soon as you have designated a group to coordinate Citizen Corps in your community, please log on to [www.citizencorps.gov/ccorps](http://www.citizencorps.gov/ccorps) and register your Citizen Corps Council contact information by clicking on the registration link. In providing this information to FEMA, you will be agreeing to be part of a list that will only be shared with other community leaders working to create Citizen Corps in their community.

## **National Citizen Corps Programs in Your Community**

The current five federal Citizen Corps programs will be implemented nationwide by August 2002.

Right now, every community can start Neighborhood Watch groups. Guidance on how to begin is available from your local sheriff's department, your local police department, or from the National Sheriffs' Association. (Visit the National Sheriffs' Association at [www.usaonwatch.org](http://www.usaonwatch.org) for more information.) A strong network of Neighborhood Watch groups can also serve as a delivery system for other Citizen Corps materials, such as emergency communications, Community Emergency Response Team training, or a family preparedness checklist.

The NCPC has created a family preparedness checklist in partnership with Citizen Corps that is available on the Citizen Corps website at [www.citizencorps.gov](http://www.citizencorps.gov) or by calling NCPC at 1-800-WE-PREVENT (1-800-937-7383).

The Community Emergency Response Team training program is a 20-hour course, typically conducted over a seven-week period. Training sessions cover disaster preparedness, fire suppression, basic disaster medical services, light search and rescue, team organization, and a module on protection against terrorist threats.

The training also includes a disaster simulation in which participants practice skills that they learned throughout the course. Your local fire and emergency medical services departments (EMS) may have a key role in bringing CERT to your community. Many states already have experienced CERT trainers who could come to your community and provide training. Soon, every state will have this capability.

VIPS is scheduled for a nationwide launch in spring 2002 and the Medical Reserve Corps guidance will be launched nationwide in summer 2002. Operation TIPS will be up and running in ten pilot communities in late summer 2002, with a national rollout to follow.



## **IV. AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

Fortunately, implementing Citizen Corps in your community can be accomplished with resources that you may already have available. Volunteer agencies in your community and your volunteer center, if you have one, can help you better direct volunteer interest to Citizen Corps activities. There are many low-cost ways for local businesses to participate; by donating the cost of a publication, by sponsoring a Citizen Corps volunteer fair, by sponsoring training for employees or neighborhood residents, and by practicing emergency preparedness plans for the business. The federal and state governments will provide training materials and technical assistance to help you get started and to help you sustain the momentum.

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), a federal agency that operates nationwide service programs, may make available to Citizen Corps Councils volunteers that participate in AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve America programs. Many of these participants are already active in disaster-related programs with other voluntary agencies. Volunteers could serve to help communities establish a training and information delivery system in neighborhoods, schools, and businesses, and could help with family preparedness and crime prevention initiatives in the community or across a region.

Volunteer support and participation in Citizen Corps can come from a variety of sources. Encourage your council members to be creative when thinking about potential resources that exist throughout the community. Appendix A is a list of government, emergency management, and first responder community websites that may be helpful to you as you expand your volunteer base. Appendix B includes a list of questions to help your council identify possible resources, including people, materials, and financial.

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## V. COMMUNICATING SUCCESS

Communicating success is a key element of sustaining momentum. It is important to share your success with the residents of your community as well as with your state and federal partners. By sharing ideas and practices that work in one community, similar actions can be embraced by other communities and can inspire further creativity.

Developing a strong Citizen Corps Council will require significant proactive communication with residents of your community. Identifying creative ways to get the message out about opportunities available through Citizen Corps, as well as calling your citizens to action and communicating success, will require an ongoing communications strategy that can include media coverage, events, and presentations.

You may want to consider forming a communications committee within your council that includes local media representatives, public relations and marketing executives, and talented spokespersons who will help you to effectively recruit and educate the members of your community.

The communications committee may want to consider:

- Developing a presentation about Citizen Corps in your community that can be shared at meetings held by groups within your community. Once a presentation has been developed, council members can fan out to present Citizen Corps to community groups, local parent/teacher associations, volunteer clubs and other groups that are interested in Citizen Corps.
- Planning a media outreach strategy that will tap into and develop relationships with your community's local media to educate them on Citizen Corps. Media opportunities might include interviews with participants active in Neighborhood Watch, coverage of your local government's proclamation of Citizen Corps week, letters to the editor, or meeting with the editorial board about Citizen Corps. Local media could also sponsor a regular newspaper or television spot to feature volunteer opportunities and Citizen Corps activities/success stories.
- Designating contacts for speaking to the media and working with these contacts to develop a consistent message for promoting Citizen Corps within your community.
- Incorporating Citizen Corps into newsletters and other publications developed by your community's local government, Chamber of Commerce, or neighborhood associations.
- Planning a community Citizen Corps fair to bring together specific volunteer opportunities in your community with citizens interested in contributing. By inviting a local radio station to sponsor it, they could also provide public service announcements in advance to promote the fair and broadcasting live from the fair on the day of the event. Your local volunteer center may be able to help arrange such an event.
- Contacting members of Congress and their local staff to help promote Citizen Corps activities within your community.



You may also want to create a recognition committee to provide support and recognition to Citizen Corps volunteers. Your local volunteer center can assist you with ideas for appropriate public recognition.

## **VI. GOVERNMENT ROLES**

### **Federal Government**

Citizen Corps is a vital component of President Bush's new USA Freedom Corps initiative, through which he wants to inspire every American to answer the call to service and to strengthen and expand service opportunities to protect our homeland, to support our communities, and to extend American compassion around the world. President Bush will continue to echo his call to service and encourage Americans to serve their communities through Citizen Corps.

Additional aspects of the federal government role in Citizen Corps will include:

- Promoting Citizen Corps at the national level and providing a national message, a logo, and a brand;
- Fostering state and community participation, overseeing progress, recognizing accomplishment, and providing opportunities for mentoring and sharing ideas and resources;
- Compiling accurate information and developing training standards and training materials for Citizen Corps activities;
- Conducting train-the-trainers courses to develop state training capabilities and providing on-line educational opportunities, as appropriate;
- Helping identify volunteer programs and initiatives that support the goals of Citizen Corps;
- Helping secure national partnerships to promote Citizen Corps throughout the country; and
- Developing financial incentives and tie-ins with other federal programs to encourage local government participation in Citizen Corps.

At the national level, Citizen Corps is coordinated by FEMA, in collaboration with DOJ, and HHS and is supported by CNCS. In addition, FEMA is working with other federal agencies, national volunteer organizations, and representatives from first responders associations. FEMA's regional offices will work with states and communities to help make Citizen Corps a success.

### **State Government**

The responsibilities of state governments mirror those of the federal government and include the mission to encourage every community in the state to participate in Citizen Corps.

Local Citizen Corps Councils will be supported by a state coordinator for Citizen Corps. The state may also choose to create a state Citizen Corps Council to bring together a number of state, local, and community organizations to discuss opportunities for collaboration and ways to address the needs of communities across the state and to share innovative practices and ways to avoid pitfalls. Since this is primarily a local government initiative, it is critical that the state coordinator has a good working relationship with the local governments and serves as an advocate.

Key state responsibilities include: identifying needs and developing a statewide strategy for increasing the first responder and volunteer collaboration; developing statewide marketing strategies; matching Citizen Corps training needs with other major state training initiatives; reporting statewide accomplishments; and ensuring that Citizen Corps communities receive consideration for any relevant grant funding administered by the state.

An example of this is supporting 1-800-FIRE-LINE, a toll free number that interested citizens can call to learn more about volunteer fire/EMS opportunities in their community. Currently, the fireline service is available in only 30 states. Through Citizen Corps, 1-800-FIRE-LINE could be available in all states and territories by having volunteers staff the phone line and provide information.

States could also support Citizen Corps by developing relevant state policies and practices. To lend their support, governors and other state representatives could also promote Citizen Corps in public speaking engagements, press conferences, and media events.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

We have experienced many changes as a nation since September 11, 2001. We are now more aware of our vulnerabilities, more appreciative of the freedoms we are protecting, and more understanding that we have a personal responsibility for the safety of our families, our neighbors, and our communities. Citizen Corps was created to engage all Americans in making our communities safer, stronger, and better prepared for any situation.

This is an exciting time in our nation's history. We have the opportunity to reinvigorate our national identity and to build an American culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility. We must not miss this opportunity to harness the innumerable acts of kindness taking place in our communities everyday and to make them a part of this profound cultural change.

## **APPENDIX A: CITIZEN CORPS RELATED WEBSITES**

### ***Government***

USA Freedom Corps	<a href="http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov">www.usafreedomcorps.gov</a>
Citizen Corps	<a href="http://www.citizencorps.gov">www.citizencorps.gov</a>
Corporation for National and Community Service	<a href="http://www.cns.gov">www.cns.gov</a>
Federal Emergency Management Agency	<a href="http://www.fema.gov">www.fema.gov</a>
Department of Justice	<a href="http://www.justice.gov">www.justice.gov</a>
Department of Health and Human Services	<a href="http://www.hhs.gov">www.hhs.gov</a>
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov">www.cdc.gov</a>
National Regulatory Commission	<a href="http://www.nrc.gov">www.nrc.gov</a>
Environmental Protection Agency Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Prevention Office	<a href="http://www.epa.gov/ceppo">www.epa.gov/ceppo</a>
National Weather Service	<a href="http://www.nws.noaa.gov">www.nws.noaa.gov</a>
U.S. Geological Survey	<a href="http://www.usgs.gov">www.usgs.gov</a>
Office of Homeland Security	<a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov/homeland">www.whitehouse.gov/homeland</a>
U.S. State and Local Gateway	<a href="http://www.statelocal.gov">www.statelocal.gov</a>

### ***Emergency Managers***

National Emergency Managers Associations	<a href="http://www.nemaweb.org">www.nemaweb.org</a>
International Association of Emergency Managers	<a href="http://www.iaem.com">www.iaem.com</a>

### ***First Responders***

#### ***Police***

International Association of Chiefs of Police	<a href="http://www.theiACP.org">www.theiACP.org</a>
National Sheriffs' Association	<a href="http://www.sheriffs.org">www.sheriffs.org</a>
National Crime Prevention Council	<a href="http://www.ncpc.org">www.ncpc.org</a>
Police Executive Research Forum	<a href="http://www.policeforum.org">www.policeforum.org</a>

National Law Enforcement and  
Corrections Technology Center

[www.nlectc.org](http://www.nlectc.org)

### *Fire*

International Association of Fire Chiefs

[www.iafc.org](http://www.iafc.org)

National Volunteer Fire Council

[www.nvfc.org](http://www.nvfc.org)

International Association of Fire Fighters

[www.iaff.org](http://www.iaff.org)

National Fire Protection Association

[www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)

Fire Department Safety Officers Association

[www.fdsoa.org](http://www.fdsoa.org)

### *Emergency Medical Services*

National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians

[www.naemt.org](http://www.naemt.org)

National Association of EMS Educators

[www.naemse.org](http://www.naemse.org)

International Rescue and Emergency Care Association

[www.ireca.org](http://www.ireca.org)

### ***Volunteer Organizations***

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

[www.nvoad.org](http://www.nvoad.org)

American Red Cross

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

Points of Light Foundation & Volunteer Center  
National Network

[www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org)

United Way

[www.unitedway.org](http://www.unitedway.org)

Association for Volunteer Administration  
and Volunteer Managers

[www.avaintl.org](http://www.avaintl.org)

Network For Good

[www.networkforgood.org](http://www.networkforgood.org)

The Independent Sector

[www.independentsector.org](http://www.independentsector.org)

Volunteer Match

[www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)

### ***Business Associations***

US Chamber of Commerce  
Center for Corporate Citizenship

[www.uschamber.com](http://www.uschamber.com)  
[www.uschamber.com/ccc](http://www.uschamber.com/ccc)



## **APPENDIX B: POTENTIAL RESOURCES FOR CITIZEN CORPS**

These questions may help you identify resources to help you implement Citizen Corps.

### ***General***

1. Who could champion this initiative in your community? Who might champion it within segments of your community? What is the best way to foster city/county/regional collaboration?
2. What organizations are already active in programs relevant to Citizen Corps objectives?
3. Which organizations usually sponsor or participate in various events that happen in your community (e.g., days of service, parades, fairs, block parties, speakers, carnivals, etc.)?
4. What federal, state, or non-profit agencies serve your community? Could they provide staff, guidance, or training to participate in Citizen Corps activities, such as United Way?
5. Does a regional planning council or a related organization include your community within its sphere of interest?
6. What current preparedness activities are in progress in your communities? How can you involve youth organizations, such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts or Explorers in Citizen Corps activities?

### ***Volunteer***

7. Do you have a volunteer center in your community where volunteer opportunities can be registered and where you can receive assistance with recruitment efforts? What do you need to do to start one?
8. Is there a state or local VOAD that could provide training and planning assistance for emergency preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery?
9. How can you involve organizations such as the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army that are already active in disaster preparedness and response?
10. Are there courses and programs already being provided in your community by voluntary organizations?
11. What volunteer groups are already in active in the community that can be called upon to serve as Citizen Corps Council partners, including community service groups, faith-based groups, and high school civic groups?
12. Is your community served by AmeriCorps volunteers? Does your community have an active Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)?

13. Are there volunteers already working and trained with organizations whose missions complement the goals of Citizen Corps? How can you tap into organizations that already recruit, manage, and place volunteers?
14. What other organizations, such as universities, volunteer groups, civic organizations, business councils, mosques, churches, or synagogues, can be tapped to sponsor volunteer participation or community events?

### ***Schools and Universities***

15. Are there colleges, universities, or vocational/technical schools in your community that have sponsored or participated in local preparedness activities?
16. Do any of these institutions have curricula or degrees of study programs related to civic administration or emergency management? Do they have an internship program that you could tap to support council efforts?
17. What other resources might your community's colleges, universities or vocational/technical schools provide to your Citizen Corps Councils?
18. Do your local high schools incorporate a community service element as part of their graduation requirement? How can you involve high school clubs' members or their leaders in Citizen Corps?

### ***Business Sector***

19. Which businesses in your community have corporate policies and value statements that encourage worker participation in community life?
20. Are there businesses in your community that have a good fit with the goals of Citizen Corps, such as insurance companies, security firms, training facilities, or manufacturers of preparedness kit items?

### ***Media***

21. Are there individuals or local celebrities in your community who would be willing to serve as motivational speakers to encourage people to participate in Citizen Corps?
22. Which TV, radio, print, or other media outlets in your area are community-service oriented?
23. Which journalists or reporters in your community frequently cover human interest stories or stories on disaster and emergency management?
24. Is there a local weather forecaster or news anchor who could be encouraged to serve as a Citizen Corps Council member?

## **APPENDIX C: OPPORTUNITIES FOR CITIZEN CORPS VOLUNTEERS**

The following are examples of how citizens can engage in volunteer opportunities that support the efforts of Citizen Corps. This is by no means an exhaustive list but is intended to give you some ideas for getting your citizens involved.

### **Neighborhood Watch Program**

- Arrange for home security inspections by crime prevention officers to identify security vulnerabilities
- Upgrade locks, security hardware, and lighting
- Train family members to keep valuables secure and to lock windows when leaving home
- Train family members on identifying suspicious behaviors that could indicate terrorist activity
- Ask neighbors to watch for suspicious activity when the house is vacant
- Organize block WATCH groups to assist children, the elderly, and other especially vulnerable persons if they appear to be distressed, in danger, or lost
- Organize meetings with neighborhood groups and trained crime prevention officers to discuss security needs and crime prevention strategies
- Obtain and study informative materials from the National Sheriffs' Association, the National Crime Prevention Council, and local law enforcement agencies

### **Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)**

- Staff a community education booth at community events
- Identify safety needs and vulnerable individuals in your neighborhood
- Distribute disaster education material in your neighborhood, in multiple languages if appropriate
- Assist with writing and distributing a CERT newsletter
- Help organize drills, activities, and supplemental training for your team
- Participate in a speaker's bureau to schools and clubs
- Assist emergency management officials and fire departments with installing smoke alarms and other special projects
- Help with CERT administrative duties by maintaining databases, helping with class registration, and assisting with class logistics
- Organize recognition activities for volunteers
- After CERT training, assist in evacuation, shelter management, donations management, care of responders at fires or emergencies, mass care of victims from a large event, damage assessment, and perimeter control

### **Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)**

- Take police reports

- Make follow-up telephone calls to victims
- Conduct fingerprinting
- Engage in crowd/parking control at special events
- Participate in search and rescue missions
- Participate in mounted patrols in parking lots at high school football games
- Operate metal detectors at a courthouse
- Serve subpoenas

### **Medical Reserve Corps**

During emergencies, members of the Medical Reserve Corps could:

- Assess and monitor the condition of patients
- Counsel patients
- Perform support and management activities (e.g., inventory and distribution of pharmaceuticals, supplies, and food, and facilitating patient transfers)
- Administer and distribute medication

In non-emergency situations, local agencies could request volunteers to assist them in performing their routine duties. Volunteers could:

- Distribute educational materials about the need for immunizations
- Give immunizations
- Assist with health education
- Provide additional support for community screening efforts (e.g., breast cancer, hypertension, diabetes, etc.)

### **Fire Department**

- Become a volunteer firefighter or emergency medical services technician
- Offer to help the fire department in its fundraising efforts. Help with bingo or bake sales or other department fundraising programs
- Help the department with its financial matters if you have a business background or special skills in this area
- Help with correspondence, public outreach, and records management
- Assist the fire department and fire prevention experts with fire prevention education in your neighborhood, place of business, schools, and community organizations
- Assist the department with its canteen service so they will have water and food for major fires

## **APPENDIX D: FACT SHEETS ON EACH CITIZEN CORPS PROGRAM**

Pages 30 – 34



## **Terrorism Information and Prevention System (Operation TIPS)**

**Operation TIPS**, administered by the U.S. Department of Justice and developed in partnership with several other federal agencies, is one of the five component programs of the Citizen Corps.

### **PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM**

Operation TIPS will be a national system for reporting suspicious, and potentially terrorist-related activity. The program will involve the American workers who, in the daily course of their work, are in a unique position to see unusual or suspicious activity in public places.

The Department of Justice is discussing participation with members of the trucking, shipping, maritime, railway, and port industries whose workers are ideally suited to help in the anti-terrorism effort because their routines allow them to recognize unusual events.

This program offers a way for these workers to report what they see in public areas and along transportation routes. Information can be reported on the toll-free hotline or online. Information received will be referred electronically to points of contact in each state as appropriate. This is not a national 911 center, and callers are expected to dial 911 for emergency local response.

### **HOW IT WILL WORK**

Industries that are interested in participating in this program will be given printed guidance material (e.g., flyers and brochures) about the program and how to contact the Operation TIPS reporting center. Industries will determine how this information will be disseminated to workers.

The information provided to the volunteers will include: how to access the hotline; warnings that the hotline is intended only for reporting suspicious activities, not individuals whose appearance or dress is of concern to the caller; a reminder that, in case of a true emergency, the caller should use the 911 system; and prohibitions against invasion of privacy, conducting investigations, or performing any law enforcement function.

Operation TIPS will be phased in across the country to allow each state to determine which law enforcement agencies should receive the information that the call center disseminates. As states identify their point(s) of contact, which can be a single point or multiple points of contact, they will be added to the system and start receiving referrals.

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## Neighborhood Watch Program

The Neighborhood Watch Program is already a strong force in community protection in America's neighborhoods. President Bush and Attorney General Ashcroft have announced that the National Sheriffs' Association will expand the Neighborhood Watch Program so that it serves more community groups, and offers community members new information about how to recognize and report signs of potential terrorist activity in their neighborhoods. These residents are critical in the detection, prevention, and disruption of terrorism. Many neighborhoods already have Neighborhood Watch programs. For those that do not, this new initiative may provide the incentive for them to start one as part of Citizen Corps.

### PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

Over the next 2 years, the National Sheriffs' Association will help to double the number of Neighborhood Watch Programs operating throughout the country from approximately 7,500 to more than 15,000. Neighborhood Watch materials and training will also be revised to teach individuals how they can assist in the war against terrorism by incorporating preparedness in their daily lives. Neighborhood Watch will continue to work to reduce crime in neighborhoods nationwide by encouraging businesses, the faith community, schools, and citizens to cooperate and assist local law enforcement by reporting suspicious activity.

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

The National Crime Prevention Council, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice, has developed a Citizen Preparedness Guide for use in this and other Citizen Corps programs. The guide provides specific actions that citizens can take in their communities to reduce crime. The guide outlines five specific themes: protecting one's self and family; protecting and comforting children; knowing and caring for neighbors; reporting crimes and suspicious activity; and emergency preparedness. Get a free copy of the guide at [www.citizencorps.gov/guidebook](http://www.citizencorps.gov/guidebook), or by calling 1-800-WE-PREVENT.

### NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

The Neighborhood Watch Program is a highly successful crime prevention effort that has been in existence for more than thirty years in cities across America. Neighborhood Watch brings together local officials, law enforcement, and citizens for the protection of communities. Developed in response to a multitude of requests from sheriffs and police chiefs nationwide looking for a crime prevention program that would incorporate citizen involvement, Neighborhood Watch became a national program under the auspices of the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA). NSA has been instrumental in launching the expanded Neighborhood Watch Program.

More information about the Neighborhood Watch Program and how to start one in your neighborhood is available at [www.usaonwatch.org](http://www.usaonwatch.org)

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## Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

**Community Emergency Response Team** training is a Federal Emergency Management Agency program that educates citizens about the hazards they face in their community and trains them in lifesaving skills. If needed following a disaster, these citizen-responders use their training as part of a neighborhood or workplace team to help others when professional responders are overwhelmed or not immediately available. CERT members provide immediate assistance to victims in their area, organize spontaneous volunteers who have not had the training, and collect disaster intelligence that will assist professional responders with prioritization and allocation of resources when they arrive.

### PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

CERT promotes a partnering between emergency management and response agencies and the people in the community that they serve. The goal is to train members of neighborhoods and workplaces in basic response skills. Then CERT teams are formed and maintained as part of the emergency response capability for their area.

If there is a natural or man-made event that overwhelms or delays the community's professional responders, CERT members can assist others by applying the basic response and organizational skills that they learned during their CERT training. These skills can help save and sustain lives until help arrives. CERT members also can volunteer for special projects that improve a community's preparedness.

### HOW IT WORKS

The basic CERT training program is a 20-hour course, typically delivered one evening per week over a 7-week period. Training sessions cover disaster preparedness, fire suppression, basic disaster medical operations, light search and rescue, disaster psychology, team organization, and a new module on terrorism to educate CERT members about BNICE agents: Biological, Nuclear, Incendiary, Chemical, and Explosive. This module will help CERT members identify situations where these agents may have been used and protective actions that they should take.

The training concludes with a disaster simulation in which participants practice skills that they learned throughout the course.

CERT information including a CERT Instructor Guide and Student Guide is located on the web at <http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/cert/index.htm>.

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## **Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)**

The Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) program is being developed by the U.S. Department of Justice in partnership with the International Association of Chiefs of Police. VIPS is one of three Citizen Corps programs administered by the Department of Justice.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM**

The VIPS program is designed to address the increasing demands on state and local law enforcement agencies. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, already limited law enforcement resources are being stretched further at a time when this country needs every available officer out on the beat. Some police departments are turning to civilian volunteers to enable police officers to be on the front lines, working to make communities safer. These volunteer outreach efforts will receive new support through VIPS.

### **EXAMPLES OF VOLUNTEER SUPPORT ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:**

- Assisting with traffic control;
- Impounding and storing marked abandoned vehicles;
- Searching for missing persons;
- Booking property;
- Transporting department vehicles;
- Enforcing handicapped parking; and
- Processing paperwork.

### **RESOURCES & CURRENT PRACTICES**

The VIPS program is scheduled to be launched in May 2002. The program will provide resources to assist local law enforcement in incorporating community volunteers into the activities of law enforcement agencies.

A tool kit for state and local law enforcement agencies will outline a series of promising practices to help them design strategies to recruit, train, and deploy citizen volunteers in their departments.

There are already many police departments across the country utilizing the talents and commitment of volunteers in their communities to support the work of their officers. Examples of some of these programs are available on the Citizens Corps website.

Go to [www.citizencorps.gov](http://www.citizencorps.gov) and click on Volunteers in Police Service or contact your local law enforcement agency to find out if they have a VIPS program you can join today.

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## Medical Reserve Corps

The **Medical Reserve Corps** will provide local communities with medical volunteers who can assist health professionals during a large-scale local emergency (e.g., pandemic influenza or a hazardous materials spill). Practicing and retired health care professionals will be on a medical reserve list, ready to be called up to duty in the event of an emergency. In addition to playing an important role during a large-scale local emergency, Medical Reserve Corps volunteers would also be active in promoting the public health life of their communities throughout the year.

### PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

**Medical Reserve Corps** will usually be overseen by local **Citizen Corps Councils**. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will support coordination and training for volunteer health professionals so that they are ready to assist their community in the event of a local emergency. Medical Reserve Corps volunteers can assist with emergency response teams, provide care to victims with non-serious injuries, and provide additional manpower/staffing to increase the effectiveness of physicians and nurses in a major crisis.

#### Medical Reserve Corps seeks to:

- Draw Americans into volunteer service;
- Create a framework to match volunteers' skills with their communities' needs;
- Train a cadre of health professionals to respond better to the needs of their communities; enhancing their skills and teaching them their roles in support of local emergency response efforts; and
- Provide reserve capacity at the community level to respond to health needs for emergencies and/or for locally identified public health needs and priorities.

### HOW WILL IT WORK?

Local officials will develop their own reserve of medical professionals based on their community's needs. Once established, local officials will decide if and when to activate their Medical Reserve Corps during an emergency.

Medical reserve volunteers will receive assignments based on their skills and qualifications. After each local community develops its own team of medical reservists, these volunteers will be able to respond to local emergencies within a few hours of being called into action.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is the lead federal agency for the Medical Reserve Corps. HHS will work with local and state agencies to develop the program guidelines and a resource manual, and to provide technical assistance to local communities who choose to develop their own Medical Reserve Corps.

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